

Yatesville Lake Bass Assessment 2016

Yatesville Lake is a 2,350 acre multipurpose US Army Corps of Engineers reservoir on Blaine Creek in Lawrence County. This lake has continually produced quality largemouth bass since final impoundment in 1994, but also produces abundant quality channel catfish, white crappie, and bluegill. Gizzard shad have allowed white crappie quality to improve and are also a key forage species of largemouth bass. Largemouth bass tournaments are numerous at Yatesville Lake.

Recently, there has been concern over potential over-harvest of largemouth bass because they are being mistaken for spotted bass. Many largemouth bass in Yatesville Lake exhibit a tongue tooth patch (usually reduced in size) that is typically a distinguishing characteristic of spotted bass. As of 2010, anglers must use other characteristics (noted in the *Kentucky Fishing and Boating Guide*) to distinguish spotted bass from largemouth bass. The minimum size limit for largemouth bass is 15 inches.

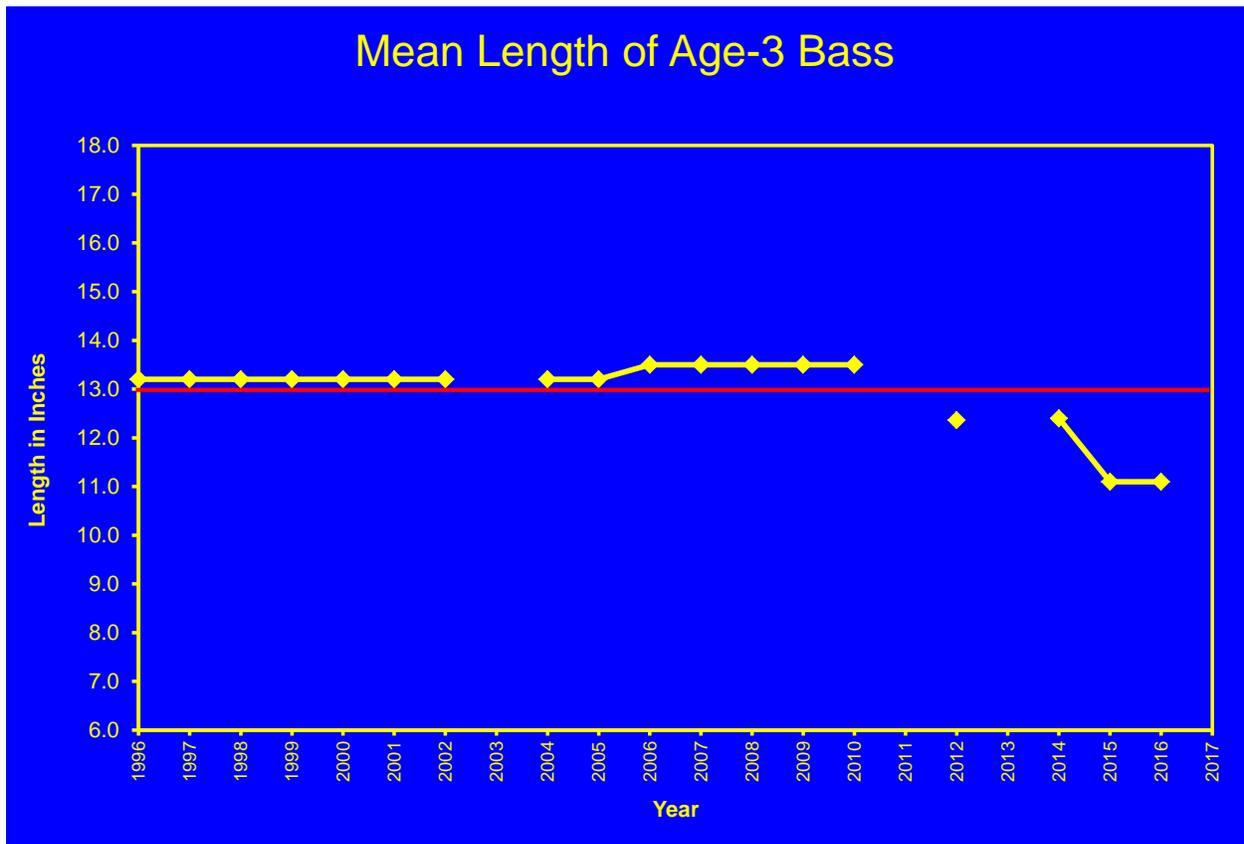
The following graphs show trends and rankings for each of the five population parameters used in the largemouth bass assessment. Sampling at Yatesville Lake was not conducted in 2003, 2011, and 2013.

Please see the [Sportfish Assessments](#) page for an explanation of how the assessment works and for a list of other lakes with largemouth bass assessments.



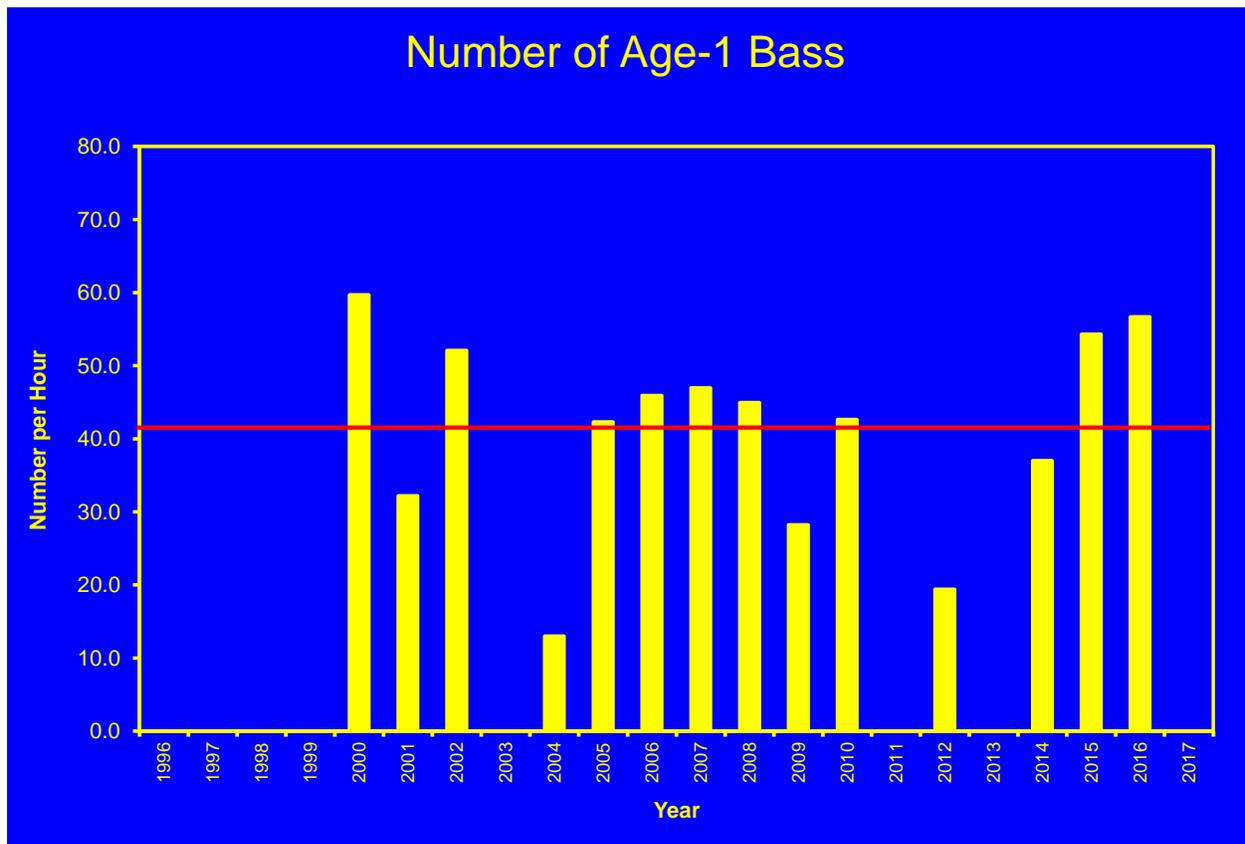
Parameter 1 – Length at age-3 (growth rate)

At Yatesville Lake, the length of an age-3 largemouth bass has averaged 13.0 inches since 1993 (see red line). Largemouth bass are showing “good” growth rates when compared to other lakes of similar size. Since the beginning, growth has been stable. However, when growth rate was last assessed at the lake in 2015, it received a “poor” rating compared to other lakes of similar size. This drop in growth rate will be monitored and if the trend continues, further assessments of the population will be made. Growth rates are generally related to factors such as population density, food resources, and weather patterns.



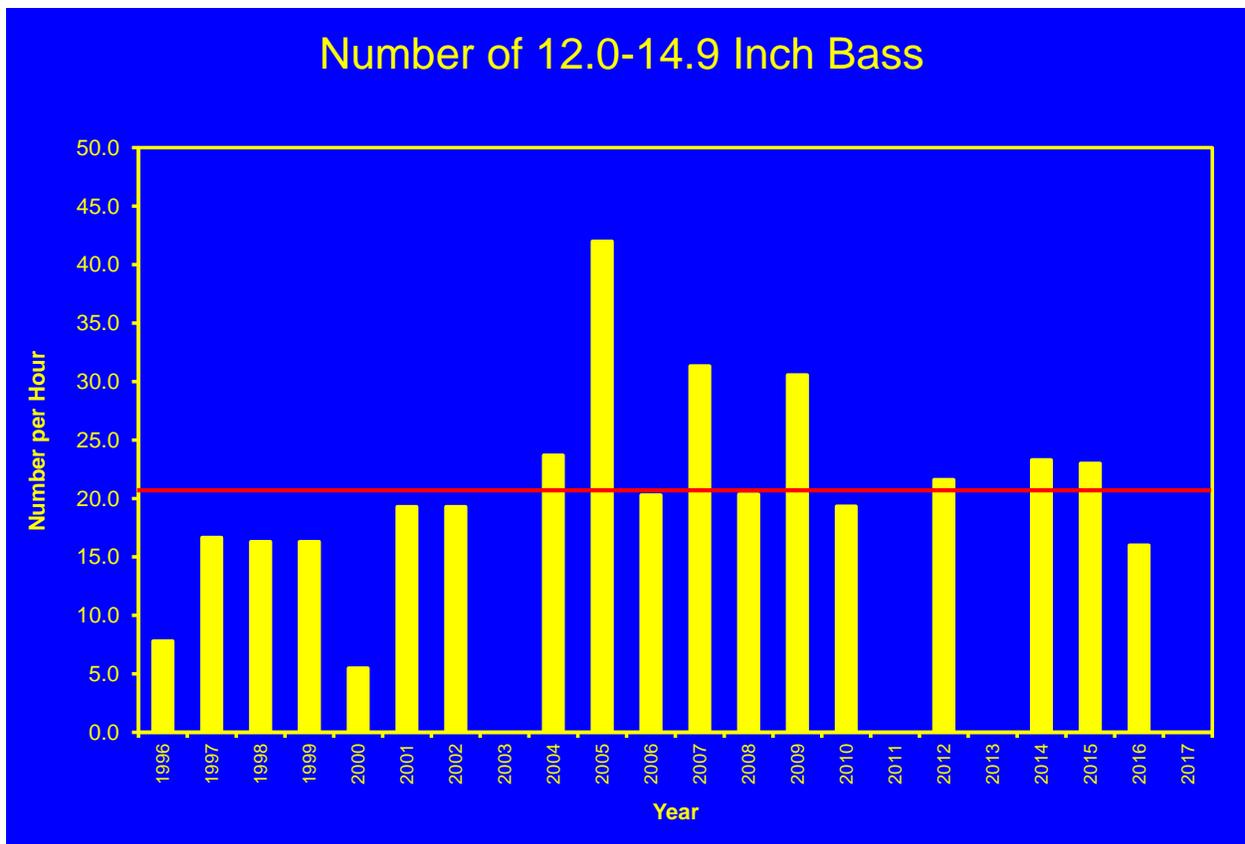
Parameter 2 – Numbers of age-1 bass (how good the spawn was)

KDFWR looks at the electrofishing catch rates of age-1 largemouth bass to assess the success of the spawn which occurred in the prior year. This is an important parameter, because the number of bass produced is a good predictor of how good the fishing will be in the next two to four years. At Yatesville Lake, age-1 largemouth bass catch rates have averaged 41.1 fish per hour of electrofishing since 2000 giving it a “good” rating when compared to other lakes in this size range. With the exception of a few low years (2004, 2009, and 2012), Yatesville Lake has consistently produced catch rates of age-1 bass in the “good” – “excellent” range. This has been helped in part by age-0 largemouth bass stockings in 2009, 2012, and 2013 to supplement poor year classes. In 2012, catch rates of age-1 bass were the lowest seen since 2004 (19.4 fish per hour). A single weak year class is not cause for concern. The last three years have produced good-to-excellent natural recruitment of age-1 largemouth bass at Yatesville Lake. Overall this age class remains fairly stable here.



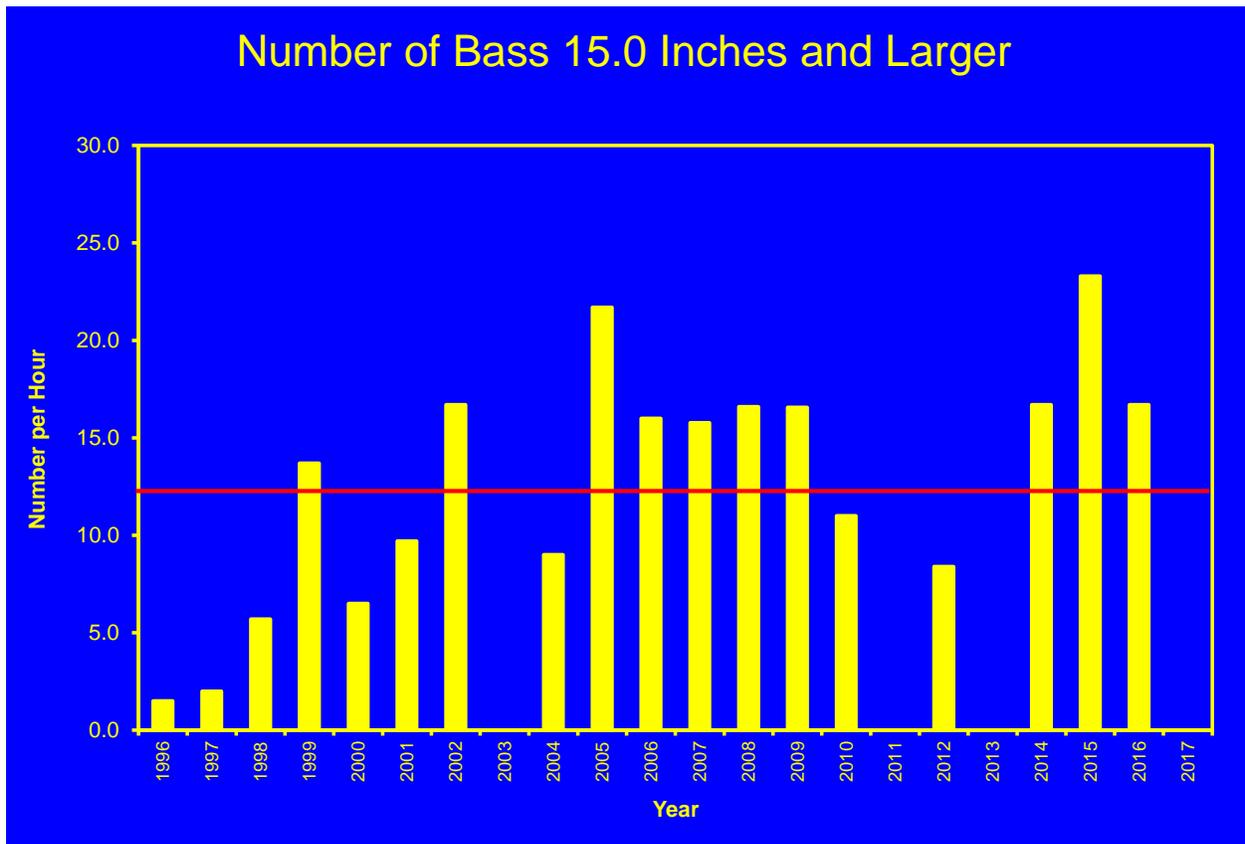
Parameter 3 – Numbers of 12.0-14.9 inch bass

The electrofishing spring catch of 12.0-14.9 inch largemouth bass has averaged 20.7 fish per hour since 1993 (red line), which gives Yatesville Lake a “fair” rating when compared to other lakes in its size range. Yatesville Lake is a relatively young lake with a bass population that has recently matured. The graph shows that long term, this has been a pretty stable parameter with only slight fluctuations in catch rates. These numbers are important because fish in this size range will soon grow to exceed the 15.0 inch legal size limit at the lake in the next year or two. While most recent years produced a “fair” catch rate of fish in this size range, it is expected that future years will likely produce “good” catch rates. 2015 and 2016 produced strong year classes of young fish that are moving up in age.



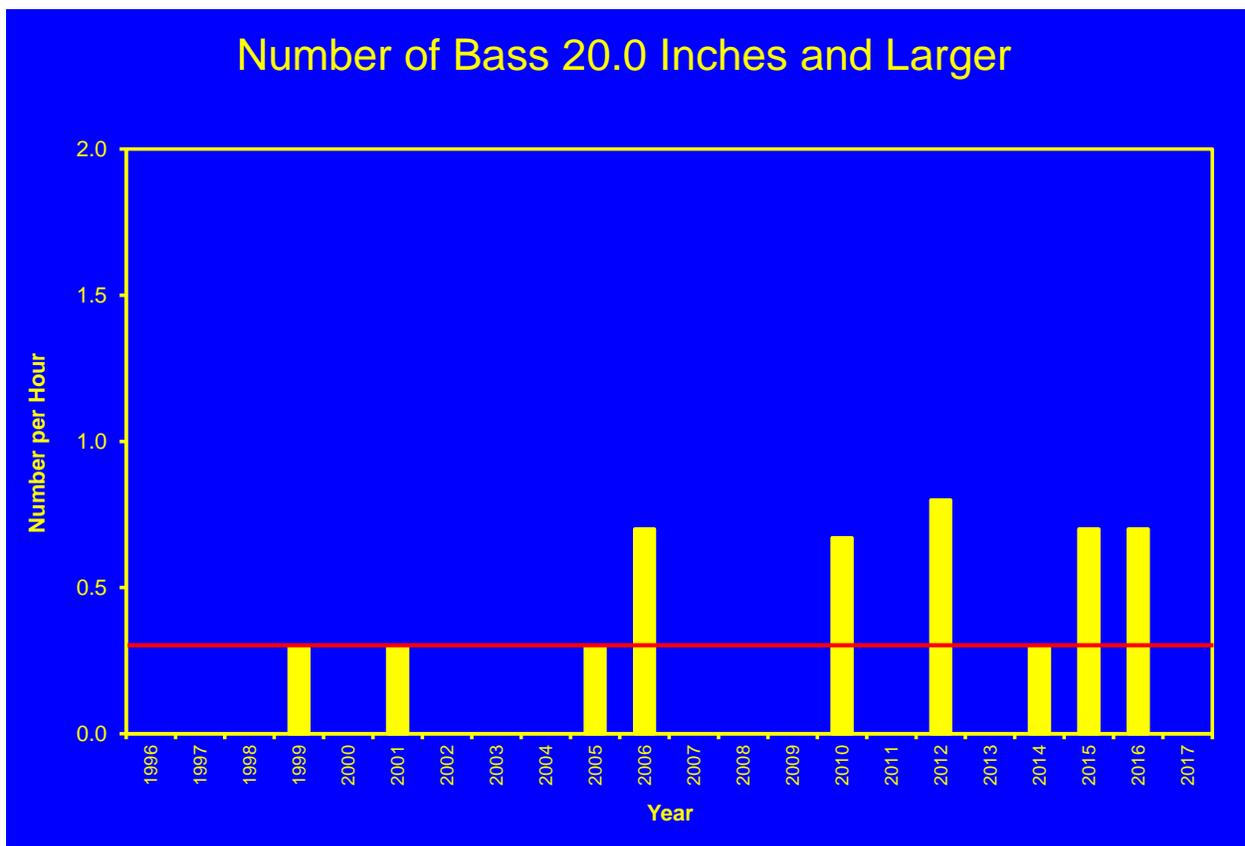
Parameter 4 – Numbers of 15.0 inch and larger bass

This parameter measures the number of fish available for harvest now. The catch rate of 15.0 inch and larger largemouth bass at Yatesville Lake has averaged 12.4 fish per hour of electrofishing since 1993 (red line). This is a “fair” catch rate for this size group. In 2012 the catch rate dropped to 8.4 fish per hour which is the lowest in 10 years and could be due to poor sampling conditions. Catch rates for every year since then have been notably higher and ranged from “good” to “excellent”. This is good news for anglers as these fish have grown into the legal harvest size and will provide opportunity for a quality fishing experience at Yatesville Lake.



Parameter 5 – Numbers of 20.0-inch and larger bass

The electrofishing catch of 20.0-inch and larger largemouth bass has averaged 0.3 fish per hour for Yatesville Lake since 1997. This catch rate gives the lake a “fair” rating when it is compared to other lakes in its size range. There have been several years where no fish in excess of 20 inches were observed. However, in 2012, 2015 and 2016 catch rates of 0.7 to 0.8 fish per hour of 20.0-inch and larger fish were observed. Most recent years have shown catch rates above average for fish in this size range. This parameter is subject to chance and is therefore not always a reliable measure of the availability of large fish, but the recent increasing catch rates are positive and provide evidence that trophy fish are present.



Overall – Total Assessment Score (All five parameters added together)

Overall, the largemouth bass fishery at Yatesville Lake has averaged a “good” rating (13.5) since 2000. The largemouth bass population at this lake has showed consistent improvement which is typical as a new lake matures. This trend is often followed by a leveling off or slight decreasing trend. This development seems to have occurred with the overall assessment score leveling off at 13 to 14. Yatesville Lake often has good natural recruitment of young fish. Most recent population categories have stabilized at an above average level. The fishery at Yatesville promises to provide anglers with a good opportunity to catch harvestable-sized fish and upcoming year classes look good to continue this trend.

